ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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PAT QUINN, GOVERNOR JOHN J. KIM, INTERIM DIRECTOR

"Rockford Region Agricultural Field Investigation Report"

File: John Leuenberger
County: Stephenson
Date: July 10, 2012
Address: 14027 N. Swiss Road
Winslow, IL 61089

Receiving Stream: Indian Creek

Legal ID: NW/21/29N/6E

Township: Winslow

Person Interviewed: John Leuenberger
Phone: Exemption 6 and Exemption 7(C)

Weather: Sunny, dry, 85°F

INTRODUCTION

This was a reconnaissance inspection that was completed. The dairy facility is located in extreme northwest Stephenson County on the Wisconsin state line. Indian Creek flows adjacent to the production facility. John and Robin Leuenberger own and operate the 200-cow facility. John was present and accompanied the compliance inspection. Biosecurity was accomplished by use of disposal boots. The inspection began at 11:45 AM. Conditions were hot and extremely dry.

FACILITY OBSERVATION AND DESCRIPTION

This dairy operation consists of a modern curtain-sided freestall shed that houses the 180 milking animals. Cows are milked two times/day in an attached parlor. Milkhouse wastewater is channeled to a concrete manure settling area (Photos #22 and #23). Manure from the sand bedded freestall barn is scraped while the animals are removed during the milking procedure. Manure is land applied daily to surrounding available cropland. Hay or harvested wheat acreage is used for the summer applications. The dairy facility did not have a manure management plan.

Manure from the freestall barn is scraped toward an elevated load-out ramp and into an application spreader. The spreader is loaded in a contained concrete area (Photo #3). Storm water from this area drains to a sump area that gravity feeds to the settling area where milkhouse and parlor wastewater is directed. The settling lanes are constructed of large concrete blocks. This area is designed to overflow into a drainage tile that outlets in a nearby grass waterway (Photo #7).

Dry cows (25-30) are segregated and housed in a small concrete feedlot that drains into a vegetation filter that empties into a holding pond. The pond was constructed for use before the freestall barn was built for the milking herd and is currently not used. Leuenberger reported that the storage structure was used extensively before the freestall barn was built. The content of the unused holding pond was green in color. It is located on the northeast corner of the farmstead.

Newborn calves (to weaning) are housed in individual calf hutches. Three separate concrete-earthen feedlots house the balance of the heifer calves at this facility. Both earthen feedlots slope toward a heavy stand of Reed's Canary grass that was established adjacent to Indian Creek. Approximately 10-40 feet of vegetation separates the earthen feedlot from the tributary. No manure solids or channelization were observed in the filter area. The earthen feedlot slopes to the filter at a four to five percent slope.

Feed for the dairy cattle is stored in large plastic bags and a tower silo. Dry ethanol by-products are stored under roof for use in the dairy rations. Dry hay is also stored in a designated building.

Mortality is disposed of by composting. This site was reported to be located in a distant cropfield. That area was not visited.

The farm consists of approximately 350 acres all of which are used for the manure applications. Some of the manure is transferred off-site to a neighboring farmer. John reported that he does not have a manure management plan. He has, however, attended recent Certified Livestock Managers seminars held in Freeport, Illinois.

SUMMARY

An exit interview was conducted with Mr. Leuenberger concerning a few compliance issues observed during the inspection. The designed wastewater overflow discharge from the concrete settling lanes to the grass waterway via the drainage tile is a violation and must be discontinued.

Leuenberger was advised that he could re-route the overflow from this area into the unused holding pond. The holding pond could also be used to store manure during wet conditions or winter snow when surface manure applications could result in a discharge to Indian Creek. Leuenberger said he would ponder the suggestion.

Although no evidence of manure appeared to be passing into or through the vegetative border, the construction of a small earthen berm along the exterior of the pasture fence would better provide total containment of any polluted wastewater that might exit the livestock pastures.

I briefed Mr. Leuenberger to anticipate receiving an Advisory letter from our Agency that would explain the alleged violations and some noticeable recommendations that might be utilized for addressing the issues. A written response would be required within a month after receiving the letter. His reply should provide an expected completion date for each waste improvement that is proposed.

The inspection concluded at 1:30 PM.

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Lee Heeren, Ag Specialist

LH/svf

Attachments:
Map
Photos

cc: DWPC/FOS and Records Unit
WPC Sect Mgr/B. Yurdin
Rockford Region